James Cockroft
HI-381
March 16, 2016

Did Germany Lose WWI?

The narrative that Germany lost WWI and had endured military defeats of any kind is a lie. While it is true that Germany had suffered serious financial losses and Germany was forced into surrendering, they did not lose the campaigns fought. If not for traitors who went on strike during the war, and if not for Britain cutting off Germans imports through the North Sea/ British Channel, Germany would have run Europe. Many have been falsely led to believe that Germany had to surrender, what they are unaware of is the military losses that the Triple Entente had them begging for the end of the war. It was shock, and not military losses that caused the German Empire to collapse eternally forcing them into signing the Treaty of Versailles. Germany had to surrender because of the anti-war protest and labor strikes going on in Germany. Many historians agree that the Central Powers won the war as Germany did not lose a single piece of land during WWI and was able to hold down France until the end of the war.

World War 1 began on July 28th 1914. This is because of the Arch Bishop Duke Franz-Ferdinand's assassination and because Austria-Hungary invading Serbia for not cooperating in the investigation to see if Serbia had involvement with the assassination. Russia then declared war on Austria-Hungary in an effort to back their ally. Was it not justified for the Austria

Hungarian citizens to be fearful and concerned of a plot to overthrow their empire? Also, didn't Austria Hungary have the right to an investigation given that the Duke was nearly assassinated a day before that by a bomb intended for him? The Bosnian Crisis (before the war) was an event where Serbs (a key amount) living in Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted to unite Serbia and Bosnia into Yugoslavia. This played a role in dividing the two empires as Austria-Hungary was opposed to this and Russia was for it. There is speculation today that Russia wanted to connect the Slavic states in their empire although this doesn't hold up well. Two days before the war started, the Willy-Nicky telegrams showed how Nicholas II referred to Wilhelm II in way of "Trust in your wisdom and friendship." It was as if neither Russia nor Germany wanted any part in this conflict. There is nothing to suggest that either side would betray each other knowing how this war would get out of hand and would become disastrous for their empires. If anything, it was loyalty to allies and the citizens desire to aid their empires in any way possible that caused this war to get out of hand. Woodrow Wilson remarked in September 1919, "Is there any man or woman-let me say, is there any child- who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry? This was an industrial and commercial war" (Tedor, 2013, p. 52).

Originally, the Ottomans had no part in the war. Germany had a choice of either the Italy or the Ottoman Empire. Because of the Italian-Turkish War, tensions were high between the two countries and there was

some dispute over who should own what was Libya (Tripoli) at that time. Although Germany was part of the Central Power and would not betray their ally, they ultimately chose the Ottomans in order to cut off trade ports of the poorly industrialized Russia. The Ottomans were already helping Germany out with fighting Russia by assisting their naval bombardment of Russia. Italy, out of fear of an Austria-Hungarian attack, meanwhile allied with France and Britain after realizing that France was set on recapturing Alsace-Lorraine (rich in coal and iron ore, the most needed minerals at that time) back from Germany that they had lost so long ago. Italy (in 1915) was now aware that France was a non-threat to them. Britain wanted war. Britain already hated Germany for the Moroccan Crisis. The Moroccan Crisis helped to build the threat of Germany to Great Britain's ally France. Germany could turn Britain's colonies against them by offering independence in exchange for a revolt. Britain/ France were set on blaming the Germans for wanting to dominate Europe and saying that they were ruthless killers.

Von Schlieffen, a General in the German army used his Schlieffen Plan in 1914. It was adopted in 1894 although the plan had been drawn up as early as 1871. He wrote this up believing that France posed a far greater threat than Russia in time of war. This required 90% of the army to mobilize and attack France (Stone, 2015, p. 10).Once France was defeated; they would focus on Russia through the Eastern Front. The Schlieffen Plan was subject to heavy criticism. Even as early as 1905, the plan called for 94 divisions,

while only 60 were available in face. Manpower increases of 300,000 had been sought in 1912 and 1913, but only 136,000 had been authorized. Thus, the plan was viewed as an underachievement if this could be pulled off. Second, the great 'right hook' took insufficient account of the time required for the huge numbers of men and horses to cover the ground involved while at the same time dealing with a multitude of water obstacles, demolished bridges, destroyed railways and road blocked by columns of refugees. For this to work, an average of 23 kilometers each day for three weeks had to be conquered. By 1914, the French had learnt well the strategic importance of the railway. This allowed them to move their operational reserves by rail to counter the German advance faster than the latter could move primarily on foot and horseback.

Training was of the highest standard. The German army had an annual training cycle involving taking a newly conscripted soldier from the basic training stage through to his proficient participation in major maneuvers a year later (Stone, 2015, p. 24).On October 1st each year, the new draft recruits (infantry) arrived and began six months of basic training at company level before those companies came together in the spring of the following year to undertake battalion-level field training. This was conducted on all sorts of terrain and in a wide range of tactical situations, but with the emphasis always upon the offence and attack. The cavalry's role had become mainly one of surveillance and line-of-communication security. Once the battalions successfully completed training, they

underwent a summer training program. Kaiser Wilhelm II the king at that time favored a more traditional role of the cavalry. Once training was complete, they would become reserves and would train the new conscripts the next year. What made this stand out was that the army was trained under the Schlieffen Plan, this meant that scenarios were made up as if the war was taking place; this was the method they would use. For example, they army would conduct mock charges.

During the Battle of the Frontiers, both Germany and France raised mass armies by means of conscription. (Zuber, 2007, p. 10) The German Army was passionate about training and tactics. German officers' careers were determined by their ability as troop trainers and tacticians. This allowed for the more skilled soldiers to make their way up. Soldiers were expected to effectively use their rifle and were required to use their terrain around them for combat conditions. The German Army was so serious about training that many German officers regarded combat as merely the final live-fire training test (Zuber, 2007, p. 20). This stood out because most countries armies expected hand to hand combat with swords as a primary tool to success; the Germans were clearly ahead of their times when it came to the science of training. War in German doctrine was an "art", decision-making and leadership in combat are creative acts. German doctrine emphasized that if the proper tactical precautions were not observed, if units attempted to cross open ground under effective fire or failed to adequately dispense, the result would be extraordinarily high causalities in a very short time.

Germany believed heavily in flanking the enemy's rear. Troops were to only attack when they feel themselves to be superior to their enemy. This was the decisive change from shock to fine tactics. The soldier had to master range estimation if he was to be able to fire his weapon accurately. This helped in the long run by allowing people to aim better with their bolt action rifles instead of spray firing and using more ammo. Ammo was never the issue, it was always about tactics. Infact, the most important training was the rifle marksmanship. Germany viewed it more advantageous to beat their opponent with weapons instead of charging at them and hoping for your troops to be stronger. Every soldier had a personal Schiessbuch (marksmanship book). Making sure that the troops were well fed was a central concern at all levels of the German Army. This would make them more aware and not distract them having to worry about conserving their energy or where their next meal would be. The purpose of Germany's offensive tactics was to place effective fire on the enemy in order to gain fire superiority and the close with the enemy by means of fire and movement and destroy close combat. The infantry attack on a deployed enemy was the baseline tactic for all German attacks (Zuber, 2007, p. 105). The surest way to success was to combine a frontal attack with an attack on the enemy flank.

At the Battle of Ardennes, the German commanders understood how direct fire tactically and the French didn't. The Germans moved by bounds using fire and movement and the French didn't. The Germans fired the

French in front and turned the French right flank, gained fire superiority, pushed the French out of their position and delivered a punishing pursuit by fire. One August 22 1914, the battle of Rossignol was fought. The Germans won this meeting engagement because IR 157's rifle fire was far superior of that of the 1 RIC that the French had (Zuber, 2007, p. 122). The Germans showed clear superiority of training, leadership, and infantry tactics as this led to most of France's defeats, some battles weren't even close. The superiority of German doctrine and command-and-control embodied in Auftragstaktik over the conventional French top-down system now became evident. I do not need to emphasize the positive effect this had for Germany's war spirit, this installed confidence in them by showing how easily battles could be won. At brigade, divisional and corps levels the German commanders took responsibility for their level of operations. The French commanders were passive and wanted for orders from higher quarters. The Germans took advantage of what was available to them by modifying their attacks based on their terrain by utilizing the woods; this assisted them as a covered and concealed approach. The Germans were more effective soldiers, they generated more accurate fire power and they were able to combine fire and movement. This meant they could rotate easily when the time came for it. The battles were like a play for them where everything was scripted and when one part went wrong, they adjusted and kept moving forward because it was all by design. The latter campaigns reflect this.

In the battle of Bellefontaine, fire fight began at optimal distance; this was part of the German Doctrine. Attack progressed due to due to superiority of German training, discipline, rifle marksmanship and offensive sprit. During the battle of Bertrix, the German operational and tactical cavalry reconnaissance was excellent. The German artillery proved to outweigh the French by a substantial margin in this fight. Germany's IR81 forced the French 6th brigade to begin to retreat. Germany chased them by forming a 'hedgehog' to engage targets in three directions. The French made a last stand but it proved to be meaningless (Zuber, 2007, p. 153). In Massin-Anloy, Germany's tactical and training proved superior once again. The German 25 ID was deployed in assembly areas south of Libin. This was stationed far to the north and had to cover the left flank. No one thought there would be a battle that day. By August 23rd, German had reorganized and dug trenches. This proved unnecessary since the Germans moved forward at dark (probably to scout and take more land) not knowing they were safe from an upcoming attack that didn't end out happening. Germans used open or half covered artillery positions and were able to place fire directly on their targets. The casualties totaled 988 Germans to 2,240 French soldiers. At Virton, Germany once again prevailed thanks to their reconnaissance. The German artillery was outnumbered 2-1 and was being fired upon from the west and south. The Germans said the French were "tough and brave" (Zuber, 2007, p. 161) but had fired too high at the Germans who sat ontop of mountains. In a rare occurrence, the French did not know

the land better than the Germans. This enabled IR7 (German) to seize the decisive terrain at Bellevue and hold it. In the battle of Ethe and Bleid, Germany was in control of the battle from beginning to end. This battle was significant as it showed Germany that if it acted too boldly, they would be greeted with heavy French fire. The result was heavy and bitter casualties for both sides. The battle of Longwy the quality of German unit training was demonstrated in extremely difficult conditions (Zuber, 2007, p. 232). In south of Longwy, this fight stood out because the German reserves were now outmatching the French's main army. Prior to the war, this was seen as "impossible." The German reserves were noted for having to little amount of artillery and their gun batteries were not nearly as good as the regulars. This showed the Germans that they would win the war so long as they utilized their troops properly. Germany cared more about tactics where as the French aimed to kill the weaker forces with their stronger ones leading to heavy losses. It was always about getting key terrain and utilizing it for the Germans. The author concludes that Germany won the Battle of the Frontiers. This was done by Germany's need to gain fire superiority and because they put emphasis on rifle usage when aiming at any distance. In his own words, he says that "the German army won the Battle of the Frontiers because of the superior peacetime doctrine and training. German patrolling and reconnaissance were vastly superior to the French" (Zuber, 2007, p. 316). To sum up the Eastern Campaign, the Russians failed to capture any part of East Prussia. Not only were the Russians held back, but

they had suffered losses to the point where they had to surrender in 1917 a year before the war ended to engage in a civil war (that was going to break out regardless of any gains made in WW1) that proved to be the end of the Russian Empire. Russia was not well equipped in the department of industrial products; they were under industrialized. This meant that their citizens could not produce enough war material/ goods to export in order to keep the economy running. It proved to be disastrous for Russia and their low agriculture from the freezing cold winters there. Although Germany had captured the Baltic's, Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine, this did not help their imports for the struggle in the home front. With Russia out of the picture, this helped strengthen the forces on the Western Front. It allowed them to shift their full focuses to the West and move all troops there. In the Mesopotamian Campaign, Britain and France prevailed and by 1918, the Ottoman Empire (a key ally and importer) was broken up to the point of destabilization. Germany was still sitting in France even at by the ceasefire. These all were factors that hurt Germany, but did not lead to their downfall.

The only factors that led to the destruction were the home front and the end of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire; these two were the shots that ended the German Empire. Stephen Tempest (an amateur historian) writes that "the average German citizen did not know his country was losing the war until suddenly they surrendered" (Tempest). Meanwhile, the Spanish Flu hit Europe in 1918-1920 affecting 500 million people worldwide and killing anywhere from 50 to 100 million people. Labor and anti-war protests led to

the need to end the German Empire. The propaganda failed miserably, it was intended for the intellectuals who had good schooling and could understand the message. It wasn't that many, less than 30% of the country stayed in school past the 6th grade. Not to say that the under educated citizens were dumb, but the presentation did not work. The propaganda acknowledged the faults of the Central Powers but did not bash the enemy in the process. It sent a message of "we are partly at fault, but here is why you should support us." It made soldiers forget why they were fighting. Adolf Hitler agreed that the propaganda did not work stating in Volume 1 Chapter 6 "All propaganda must be popular and its intellectual level must be adjusted to the most limited intelligence among those it is addressed to.........But if, as in propaganda for sticking out a war, the aim is to influence people as a whole......the German soldier, under the direct impression of the resistance, felt himself swindled by his propaganda service. His desire to fight, or even to stand film, was not strengthened, but the opposite occurred. His courage flagged. By contrast, the war propaganda of the English and Americans was psychologically sound. By representing the Germans to their own people as barbarians and Huns, they prepared the individual soldier for the terrors of war, and thus helped to preserve him from disappointments" (Hitler, 2009, p. 117). Though most have their minds made up about Hitler, it is fair to say he is telling the truth here since almost all would agree he rose through the ranks by connecting with the general public.

The soldier's wives and children were struggling at home. Wives told their husbands to come back home to help Germany get back on its feet and end the "imperialist effort" by them. Most of the German newspapers disagreed with the war and were under the belief that if they agreed to an armistice, everything would be worked out. World War 1 was never supposed to get out of hand; it was a gigantic misunderstanding as I've written in the beginning of this paper. Austria-Hungary was no more by 1918. Hungary was already in the middle of a revolution (involving Socialists) involving the whole country while Vienna suffered serious labor strikes. Czechoslovakia and the newly formed Yugoslavia were in a rush to leave the mess (bankruptcy to add) that was left for them.

All of this created division amongst citizens. Were they to join the ranks of the Bolsheviks, overthrow the government for a new one (Weimar Republic), or stand beside the royalists while watching the country crumble? To preface this, Russia was already involved in a war to create world Bolshevism with the center focus in Russia. There were already 137 strikes in 1915 rising to 561 by January, 1918. A high percentage of workers (50% of Germans worked for industrial labor) in factories were ready to rebel. They could not afford to send their children to higher education; generations of families would end up working in factories and there was a slim chance you would be promoted to manager because the owners often times would give the job to their kids. They would watch as people who ran the stock exchange and banks putting in no physical effort

became rich almost automatically. This made the industrial feel neglected by society. They favored a system where everyone made an equal pay or where society would pay for their future generations to go to college and get the education they wanted. This ideology was hot for the time; many people wanted a Bolshevik revolution because they were against all wars and imperialism. They felt that if Bolshevism won in all countries, there would be no wars. Bolshevism was also brand new and had not been done on a country-wide scale before. It didn't help when the rich spoke out against this, often times they would be viewed as protecting their wealth. Their only chance of saving the system was to show how the Bolsheviks would take away land from farmers and would tell them how much to produce. People were also skeptical of the Bolshevik leaders as they did not want to give up their property rights. They also did not like Marx's teachings of endless war against the people who did not agree with them because many of these people were friends of friends, relatives, or people they would talk to at a bar. Most of the soldiers who returned back from war did not want Bolshevism but favored reforms through a democracy. The Weimar Republic promised that their voices would be herd better in elections and this is what led to its victory during that time. Citizens were also not willing to leave everything they loved about Germany behind for an international one world government regime with an internationalist trade system.

On January 28th 1918, 100,000 workers took to the streets in Berlin rising to 400,000 within a few days. To preface this, Russia was already involved in a war to create world Socialism with the center focus in Russia. Socialists who didn't want enter Russia to fight their war decided to take to the streets. It only got worse for Germany. Two separate revolutions broke from middle to late 1918 out killing over 300,000 citizens and soldiers. The first stage started on October 29th, 1918 and lasted until November 9th, 1918. Each side clashed in and what were underground Bolsheviks now became battalions. The first stage ended with King Wilhelm II's abdication. A local Bolshevik newspaper named Forward wrote about it with the headlines "The Free People's State is Here!" (Hilferding, 1918). Hilferding claimed that "the victory of the working people has been achieved." He also tells the Socialists to "Follow all instructions of the new people's government and of their officials. It acts in closest cooperation with the workers and soldiers." The Bolsheviks had formed a state within a state in Munich and other parts of Germany. The second stage had already started in November 3rd, 1918 and had lasted until 1919 after the war was already over. Germany had to surrender on November 11th, 1918. A factor that also contributed to it was that they had no trade partners. The Ottoman Empire had failed, all of east Europe was in the middle of a war, much of southern Europe sanctioned Germany for being blamed for it, and west Europe was at war with Germany.

France would not allow trade imports to go from Spain through France. France even went as far to start a price war with Germany. GNP industrial products were used to undercut a nation's credit based on value of such products in the open market. For instance, if the price is drastically lowered it will force the other country to lower its prices to compete and this can draw on cash reserves in the long term. Germany was attempting to do to cut into GB national budget. The United States started to flood the European market with cheap industrial agricultural goods which impacted Germany. By lowering their prices exponentially, it made the Germany incapable of paying back debt on their loans. This causes the country being economically attacked to be incapable of paying back their debt. This also causes for their interest to compound/spike up since the country is unable to pay back their creditors. Also, customers were inclined to buy foreign goods a country right next to theirs on a black market because it is much cheaper. The final factor that led to the German Empires destruction was the naval blockade in the war. Over 750,000 German civilians, mainly children and the elderly perished from malnourishment (Tedor, 2013, p. 50). Germany would not sign the Treaty of Versailles until the summer of 1919 knowing that it would mean the breakup of Germany and would bankrupt them by forcing them to pay 100,000 tons of gold. Germany also had to give up all of their cows to France along with the contested Alsace-Loraine.

If not for the German Revolution and the naval blockades, Germany would have won WWI. Most of Europe was destroyed and was bankrupt by

the end of the war. Because of the shock and the four years of world war, Germany had to be overthrown. Many Germans felt betrayed for getting into this war that they wanted no part of. To help Europe get back on its feet, Germany had sent troops in to help fight the Soviets in the East while they were being attacked by America, France, and Britain in the West. Germany won the Eastern Front and had won the Western Front, that's why Germany had to return Alsace-Lorraine to France at the end of the war; France never captured it. Germany had not lost any piece of land in the entire war. They won the battle, but lost the fight.